

Message Text

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USNMR SHAPE PRIORITY

USCINCEUR PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 3 VIENNA 1619

LIMDIS

FROM US REP MBFR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJECT: MBFR: EVALUATION OF INFORMAL SESSIONS
WITH EASTERN REPS

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: THIS MESSAGE EVALUATES THE OUTCOME OF THE THREE INFORMAL DISCUSSION SESSIONS BETWEEN ALLIED AND EASTERN REPS HELD ON FEBRUARY 6, 13 AND FEBRUARY 20. THE MAIN PRACTICAL OUTCOME OF THESE SESSIONS HAS BEEN AN ORGANIZATIONAL ONE, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SMALL FORUM FOR INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS OF THE SUBJECT MATTER OF THE NEGOTIATIONS, A FORUM NOW ACCEPTED BY BOTH EAST AND WEST ALTHOUGH WITH CONTINUING RESERVATIONS BY SOME SMALLER NATO ALLIES AND BY THE ROMANIANS. IN REACHING THIS OUTCOME, THE ALLIES HAVE MADE NO SACRIFICE OF THEIR NEGOTIATING POSITION,

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NOR HAS THE EAST. THE GROUND RULES FOR DISCUSSION

TENTATIVELY AGREED ON ARE WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO THE POSITION OF EITHER SIDE. THEY DO NOT REPRESENT A COMMITMENT BY EITHER SIDE TO NEGOTIATE ON ANY GIVEN TOPIC, BUT MERELY PROVIDE AN AGREED SEQUENCE BY WHICH TOPICS CAN BE PRESENTED BY EACH SIDE AND WHICH THEY WOULD BE ACTIVELY DISCUSSED ONLY TO THE EXTENT THAT PARTICIPANTS ARE INTERESTED IN DOING SO.

2. THUS THERE HAS BEEN NO SUBSTANTIVE GAIN OR LOSS FOR THE WEST. THERE HAS BEEN A LIMITED ORGANIZATIONAL GAIN, IN THAT THE INFORMAL SESSIONS SHOULD PROVIDE WHAT HAS BEEN LACKING FROM THE OUTSET OF THE NEGOTIATIONS, A FRAMEWORK FOR DETAILED EXPLORATION OF EASTERN ATTITUDES TOWARDS WESTERN PROPOSALS. THE AD HOC GROUP WILL IN ALL PROBABILITY APPROVE CONTINUATION OF INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS ON THE BASIS THUS FAR REACHED, DEPENDENT ON SOME MINOR CLARIFICATIONS. END SUMMARY.

3. ON FEBRUARY 6, AFTER CONSULTATION IN CAPITALS FOLLOWING THE MID-DECEMBER BREAK AND LENGTHY CONSULTATION AMONG THEMSELVES AND WITH THE EAST, ALLIED REPS SUGGESTED TO THE SOVIET, POLISH AND CZECHOSLOVAK REPS THAT AN INFORMAL DIALOGUE BE STARTED ON THE SUBJECT MATTER OF THE NEGOTIATIONS. ALLIED REPS SUGGESTED SELECTION OF US-SOVIET GROUND FORCES AS AN INITIAL TOPIC FOR DISCUSSION SINCE IT WAS COMMON TO THE POSITION OF BOTH SIDES. THEY SUGGESTED THAT IN CONSIDERING THIS TOPIC, THE EAST SHOULD EXERCISE RESTRAINT AND REFRAIN AT LEAST TEMPORARILY FROM PUTTING FORTH OTHER ELEMENTS OF ITS PROGRAM WHICH WERE NOT COMMON TO THE APPROACHES OF BOTH SIDES, BUT THAT THE INFORMAL AGREEMENT TO FOLLOW THIS COURSE WOULD BE WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO THE SUBSTANTIVE POSITIONS OF EITHER SIDE. THE ALLIED OBJECTIVE WAS TO SEEK TO EXPLOIT INDICATIONS OF SOVIET INTEREST IN POSSIBLE ACCEPTANCE OF THE WESTERN TWO-PHASE PROPOSAL BY ESTABLISHING A FRAMEWORK FOR DISCUSSION WHICH WOULD PERMIT DEVELOPMENT OF

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THIS TOPIC WITHOUT REQUIRING ADVANCE CONCESSIONS OF SUBSTANCE FROM THE SOVIETS.

4. AN ADDITIONAL WESTERN MOTIVE WAS TO ESTABLISH AN INFORMAL FORUM FOR EXPLORATION OF THE WESTERN REACTION TO THE OVERALL ALLIED PROGRAM IN ORDER TO DEVELOP THE DETAILED INFORMATION ON EASTERN VIEWS NEEDED TO SERVE AS A BASIS FOR FUTURE ALLIED TACTICS

AND DECISIONS. UNDER PRESENT OPERATING CONDITIONS IN VIENNA, THERE HAS BEEN NO WAY TO SYSTEMATICALLY CARRY OUT THIS NORMAL NEGOTIATING FUNCTION. PLENARY DISCUSSIONS NECESSARILY TAKE THE FORM OF SET PRESENTATIONS OF THE OFFICIAL VIEWPOINT OF EACH SIDE AND EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY OF INFORMAL DISCUSSION. STRONG ALLIED SENSITIVITIES PRECLUDE CARRYING OUT THE NECESSARY EXPLORATION THROUGH US-SOVIET BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS. HENCE, IT WAS NECESSARY TO SECURE AUTHORIZATION FROM BOTH EASTERN AND WESTERN PARTICIPANTS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF WHAT HAS BECOME KNOWN AS THE EMISSARY SYSTEM; THAT IS, A SMALL GROUP CONSISTING OF U.S. AND SOVIET REPRESENTATIVES WITH ADDITIONAL PARTICIPANTS FROM NATO AND WARSAW PACT, RESTRICTING THIS NUMBER TO THE MINIMUM POSSIBLE IN ORDER TO CREATE A FORUM WHICH WOULD PERMIT SOME INFORMAL EXCHANGE WITHOUT COMMITMENT.

5. AS WASHINGTON AGENCIES ARE AWARE, IT HAS BEEN EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO ESTABLISH A FORUM OF THIS KIND. ALTHOUGH FULLY JUSTIFIED BY THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE TREATMENT OF THE SUBJECT MATTER, IT NECESSARILY INVOLVES THE EXCLUSION OF SOME REPRESENTATIVES OF SOME SOVEREIGN AND EQUAL PARTICIPANTS. AMONG THE NATO ALLIES, THE BELGIANS, TURKS AND GREEKS HAVE VIGOROUSLY OPPOSED THIS CONFIGURATION AND IT IS CLEAR THAT THERE IS RESISTANCE TO IT FROM EASTERN EUROPEANS, ESPECIALLY THE ROMANIANS. BECAUSE OF

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LIMDIS

FROM US REP MBFR

THESE DIFFICULTIES, IT TOOK THREE WEEKS AFTER THEY RECONVENED IN MID-JANUARY FOR THE ALLIES TO AGREE AMONG THEMSELVES ON THE COMPOSITION OF AN EMISSARY TEAM. THE TURKS, GREEKS AND BELGIANS HAVE THERETOFORE INSISTED THAT THE TERM "EMISSARY" NOT BE USED, THAT THE DISCUSSIONS BE RESTRICTED TO INFORMAL SOCIAL GATHERINGS, AND, MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL, THAT THE SUBJECT MATTER OF THE INFORMAL SESSIONS BE RESTRICTED SOLELY TO DISCUSSION OF WHETHER OR NOT THE SOVIETS WOULD AGREE TO BEGIN INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS ON THE SUBJECT OF US-SOVIET GROUND FORCES. THESE ALLIES WOULD NOT AGREE TO USE OF THE EMISSARY GROUP FOR DISCUSSION OF A WIDER SUBJECT MATTER ON THE GROUNDS THAT THIS STEP WOULD INSTITUTIONALIZE THE EMISSARY CONFIGURATION AS THE ONLY FORUM WHERE REAL BUSINESS IS LIKELY TO BE DONE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS AND THUS DIMINISH THEIR OWN STATUS.

6. THE SOVIETS HAD SIMILAR DIFFICULTIES. THEY HAD TAKEN THE
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INITIATIVE PRIOR TO THE MID-DECEMBER BREAK TO SUGGEST TO THE US REP THAT RESORT BE MADE TO EMISSARY GATHERINGS AFTER THE BREAK. HOWEVER, FOR THREE WEEKS AFTER THIS STEP WAS SUGGESTED TO THEM IN MID-JANUARY, SOVIET REPS BACKED AND FILLED, CLAIMING THAT EMISSARY GATHERINGS WOULD BE POSSIBLE ONLY WHEN A SUBJECT HAD BEEN AGREED IN ADVANCE AND THAT BILATERAL DISCUSSION WITH THE US WAS PREFERABLE. IT BECAME CLEAR BOTH FROM BEHAVIOR OF SOVIET REPRESENTATIVES AND FROM STATEMENTS MADE BY ROMANIAN REPRESENTATIVES THAT ROMANIAN OPPOSITION TO A GATHERING FROM WHICH THEY WOULD BE EXCLUDED WAS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN THE SOVIET HESITATION AND THAT THE OTHER EASTERN EUROPEANS WERE ALSO NOT ENTHUSIASTIC. IN FACT, THE ROMANIANS THREATENED TO WALK OUT OF THE CONFERENCE, AS THE BELGIANS HAD WALKED OUT OF THE AD HOC GROUP DURING THE EXPLORATORY TALKS FOR SIMILAR REASONS.

7. FINALLY, THE SOVIETS PROPOSED THAT PURELY SOCIAL OCCASIONS TAKE PLACE, WHERE PARTICIPATION COULD OSTENSIBLY BE DETERMINED BY THE HOST OF SOCIAL GROUNDS, RATHER THAN BY AGREEMENT OF BOTH SIDES.

8. THE FIRST INFORMAL SESSION OF THIS KIND WAS FINALLY HELD ON FEBRUARY 6. THE US REP SPEAKING FOR THE ALLIES PROPOSED THAT THE EAST-WEST DIALOGUE BEGIN WITH THE SUBJECT OF US-SOVIET FORCES. THE SOVIET ANSWER, DELIVERED IN A SIMILAR INFORMAL SESSION ON FEBRUARY 13 (SEE REPORT IN VIENNA 1344), WAS THAT THE ALLIES HAD BEEN MISTAKEN IN INTERPRETING EARLIER EASTERN REMARKS AS INDICATING INTEREST OR ACCEPTANCE OF THE WESTERN PHASED APPROACH. EASTERN REPS HAD MERELY WISHED TO POINT OUT THE WEAKNESSES OF THE ALLIED TWO-PHASE PROPOSAL. KHLESTOV ALSO SAID THAT EASTERN ACCEPTANCE OF THE WESTERN PROPOSAL TO BEGIN A DIALOGUE WITH A DISCUSSION OF US-SOVIET GROUND FORCES WOULD IN ADDITION PREJUDICE THE SOVIET PROGRAM. HE WANTED CONTINUATION OF THE INFORMAL SESSIONS AS A USEFUL INSTITUTION FOR DISCUSSION. BUT, INSTEAD OF THE TOPIC PROPOSED BY THE ALLIES, HE WANTED A FREE DISCUSSION OF THE ENTIRE SUBJECT MATTER OF THE NEGOTIATIONS, WHETHER WITHOUT ANY AGREED TOPIC TO START WITH, OR USING A DISCUSSION HEADING ENTITLED "FOREIGN AND NATIONAL FORCES WITH ALL THEIR COMPONENTS" WHICH WAS DRAWN FROM THE DESCRIPTION OF THE SOVIET APPROACH.

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9. IT WAS UNCLEAR AND EVEN DOUBTFUL WHETHER KHLESTOV'S DENIAL OF SOVIET WILLINGNESS TO DISCUSS A PHASED APPROACH WAS DEFINITIVE OR WHETHER HE REALLY UNDERSTOOD THAT ACCEPTANCE OF THE WESTERN PROPOSAL MIGHT IN FACT HAVE BEEN CONSTRUED AS BEING WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO THE SOVIET POSITION IF THE SOVIETS HAD SO DESIRED. THE SOVIET REPRESENTATIVES SAID THEY BELIEVED IT WOULD BE FAR MORE PRODUCTIVE TO DISCUSS THE ALLIED PROCEDURAL APPROACH FURTHER BILATERALLY. US DEL CONSIDERED THAT ALTHOUGH THIS WAS PROBABLY OBJECTIVELY A MORE PROMISING METHOD, IT WAS NOT A PRACTICAL APPROACH GIVEN THE FACT THAT THE PROCEDURAL APPROACH HAD BEEN APPROVED BY THE NATO COUNCIL AND GIVEN ALLIED SENSITIVITIES TO US-SOVIET BILATERALISM. IN ANY EVENT, ONCE THE FORUM CHANGED FROM A BILATERAL TO A MULTILATERAL DISCUSSION

WITH THE PRESENCE OF OTHER ALLIED AND WARSAW PACT PARTICIPANTS, IT WAS CLEAR THAT SOVIET REPS BELIEVED THEY COULD NOT AFFORD TO BE SEEN TO ACCEPT AN ITEM FOR DISCUSSION WHICH MIGHT BE CONSIDERED PREJUDICIAL TO THE EASTERN APPROACH.

10. FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF THE US DELEGATION, WE WOULD HAVE BEEN READY TO RECOMMEND ACCEPTING THE SOVIET IDEA OF DISCUSSING WITHOUT PREJUDICE THE OVERALL PROGRAMS OF BOTH SIDES IN THE EMISSARY FORUM IN VIEW OF OUR BELIEF THAT ONLY SUCH A GROUPING PROVIDED AN EFFECTIVE FORUM TO CONDUCT THE NEGOTIATIONS AND THAT THE IMMEDIATE NEED WAS TO ENGAGE THE EAST IN A DETAILED DISCUSSION OF THE ALLIED PROGRAM. BUT WE HAD TO COPE WITH STRONG RESISTANCE TO THIS IDEA FROM THE BELGIANS AND TURKS, SUPPORTED BY THE BRITISH, AND THEIR JOIN INSISTANCE THAT INFORMAL SESSIONS

BE USED ONLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING THE
PROCEDURAL PROPOSAL THAT DIALOGUE START WITH A DISCUSSION

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LIMDIS

FROM US REP MBFR

OF US-SOVIET GROUND FORCES, RATHER THAN FOR DISCUSSION
OF THE SUBSTANCE OF THE PROPOSALS OF BOTH SIDES.
THE ALLIED COUNTRIES NAMED WERE WILLING TO DROP THE
EMISSARY FORUM AND TO LIMIT THE ACTIVITIES OF THE
NEGOTIATIONS TO ONCE WEEKLY PLENARY STATEMENTS
BY THE ALLIES AND BY THE EAST.

11. THEREFORE, IN ORDER TO PURSUE THE OBJECTIVE
OF MAINTAINING THE EMISSARY FORUM AND TO KEEP OPEN THE POSSIBILITY
OF ACHIEVING THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF BRINING THE SOVIETS
TO ENTER ON SERIOUS DISCUSSION OF THE ALLIED PHASE I
PROGRAM, US DELEGATION WAS OBLIGED TO CONTINUE DISCUSSION OF
THE ORIGINAL WESTERN PROCEDURAL PROPOSAL WITH THE EAST IN
FURTHER INFORMAL SESSIONS.

12. THE OUTCOME OF THE FEBRUARY 20 SESSION IS AN
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INFORMAL ORAL UNDERSTANDING ABOUT THE ORDER OF TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED IN THE EMISSARY GATHERINGS WHICH IN EFFECT PERMITS PRESENTATION OF VIEWS ON THE ENTIRE PROGRAM OF BOTH SIDES, WHILE NOT EXPLICITLY SO STATING. ITS FORMULATION CONTAINS A FEW CONNOTATIONS IN FAVOR OF THE ALLIED POSITION WHICH MIGHT BE FURTHER DEVELOPED, BUT OF WHICH TOO MUCH CANNOT REALISTICALLY BE MADE NOW. IT IS UNDERSTOOD THAT THE FORMULATION OF TOPICS IS WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO THE SUBSTANCE OF THE POSITIONS OF EITHER SIDE AND THAT WHAT IS SAID IN THESE INFORMAL GATHERINGS IS WITHOUT COMMITMENT BY EITHER SIDE. THE AGREED HEADINGS ARE NOT AN AGREED AGENDA FOR NEGOTIATIONS NOR A COMMITMENT TO NEGOTIATE ON ANY GIVEN TOPIC. ALLIED REPS DID NOT DENY RIGHT OF EASTERN REPS TO RAISE NUCLEAR AND AIR UNDER HEADING OF "OTHER TOPICS," BUT ALLIED REPS COULD NOT READILY HAVE REJECTED THIS ONCE THEY THEMSELVES HAD MENTIONED THAT SOVIET RIGHT TO RAISE OTHER TOPICS UNDER JUNE 28 COMMUNIQUE WOULD NOT BE UNDERMINED BY ACCEPTANCE OF THEIR PROCEDURAL PROPOSAL (SEE PARA 7 OF ALLIED TACTICS PAPER REPORTED TO WASHINGTON IN VIENNA 0655). ALLIED REPS MADE CLEAR THEIR CONTINUED NEGATIVE POSITION ON THIS SUBJECT.

13. THE PRACTICAL OUTCOME THEREFORE IS ONLY AN ORGANIZATION ONE AS REGARDS THE CONFIGURATION OF PARTICIPATION IN INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS. BOTH SIDES HAVE NOW TENTATIVELY APPROVED A FORUM FOR INFORMAL DISCUSSION OF THE SUBJECT MATTER OF THE TALKS AND SOME TOPICS FOR THESE DISCUSSIONS. THE EXISTENCE OF THIS FORUM WILL CONTINUE TO BE ATTACKED BY THE ROMANIANS AND THERE WILL BE CONTINUED RUMBLINGS OVER IT FROM THE BELGIANS AND TURKS. IT IS LIKELY AT THE OUTSET THAT THE DISCUSSION IN THE INFORMAL GROUP WILL HAVE A ROUTINE AND FAMILIAR CHARACTER. THE ALLIES WILL BRING UP ALL ASPECTS OF THEIR PHASE I PROGRAM; THE EASTERN REPS WILL BRING UP ALL ASPECTS OF THEIR PROGRAM. BUT THE GATHERINGS WILL PROVIDE THE NEEDED FORUM FOR DETAILED EXAMINATION OF EASTERN REACTION TO THE
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WESTERN POSITION.

14. ALTHOUGH KHLESTOV HAS STATED THE ALLIES WERE MISTAKEN IN BELIEVING THE SOVIETS WERE INTERESTED IN EXPLORING THE PHASING CONCEPT, THE FACT THAT THE SOVIET POSITION ON HOW DISCUSSION TOPICS WERE TO BE FORMULATED CHANGED AFTER BILATERAL DISCUSSION WITH THE US REP IN WHICH LATTER EMPHASIZED WESTERN OBJECTIVE OF PERMITTING DISCUSSION OF US-SOVIET FORCES WITHOUT DAMAGE TO SOVIET PROGRAM, RECENT REMARKS BY SMIRNOVSKY ABOUT THE DESIRABILITY OF TOKEN WESTERN EUROPARTICIPATION IN A FIRST PHASE IN THE EVENT OF A PHASED APPROACH, AND ALSO LESS SIGNIFICANT ALTHOUGH FREQUENT POLISH STATEMENTS ABOUT THE DESIRABILITY OF A FORCE FREEZE IN THE EVENT OF A PHASED APPROACH, PROVIDE SOME EVIDENCE OF CONTINUED EASTERN INTEREST IN THIS POSSIBILITY. IN THE INFORMAL SESSIONS, THE ALLIES WILL SEEK TO DRAW THE SOVIETS TO DISCUSSION OF DELAYING WESTERN EUROPEAN REDUCTIONS TO A SECOND PHASE AND TO ENGAGE THEM IN A SERIOUS DISCUSSION OF US AND SOVIET FORCE PHASE I REDUCTIONS AND THE COMMON CEILING.

15. WE BELIEVE THAT THE OUTCOME DESCRIBED HERE IS FULLY WITHIN THE TERMS OF THE GUIDANCE PROVIDED IN STATE 5679 (EXDIS, NOTAL). SPECIFICALLY, DISCUSSIONS WILL BEGIN WITH US-SOVIET GROUND FORCE REDUCTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH PHASE I PROPOSAL. THE ALLIES WILL CONTINUE TO EMPHASIZE REQUIREMENT THAT EAST AGREE TO CONCEPT OF COMMON CEILING AS PART OF PHASE I. THE ALLIES WILL ALSO MAKE CLEAR THAT ANY FURTHER ADVANCE COMMITMENT TO FRG REDUCTIONS IN SECOND PHASE WOULD REQUIRE EQUIVALENT COMMITMENT TO COMMON CEILING AS OUTCOME OF PHASE II. THE ALLIES WILL CONTINUE TO OPPOSE REDUCTIONS OF AIR AND NUCLEAR FORCES AND MAKE CLEAR THAT ALLIED POSITION ON THIS SUBJECT REMAINS UNCHANGED.

16. IN ITS NEXT SESSIONS ON FEBRUARY 25 AND FEBRUARY 26, THE AD HOC GROUP SEEMS LIKELY TO APPROVE INDEFINITE CONTINUATION OF THE INFORMAL SESSIONS,
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WHICH HAS BEEN OUR IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE.

17. THIS DEVELOPMENT SHOULD PERMIT US AFTER THREE MONTHS OF NEGOTIATION IN VIENNA TO GET DOWN TO A MORE BUSINESSLIKE APPROACH TO THE SUBJECT MATTER SINCE THE OUTCOME AFFECTS ONLY THE ORGANIZATION

OF WORK RATHER THAN SUBSTANCE, WE DO NOT
BELIEVE NEW INSTRUCTIONS ARE NEEDED.HUMES

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